

## **The Random Jottings of Donald Jay from Nelson in Pendle**

Wolf Fell, Forest of Bowland, Lancashire.

In the heart of the Forest of Bowland, nestled amidst the rugged landscape, stood Wolf Fell—a place steeped in history and myth. It was said to be the last refuge of the wolves, the real wolves' house, or "woofus," as the locals called it. The wolves had long disappeared from the land, their presence reduced to tales passed down through generations.

Centuries ago, the Sherburne family ruled over the Wolf Hall estate, holding dominion over the land and its people. The Sherburnes maintained their control through feudal customs, with the tenants living around Saddle Fell bound by their lord's orders.

Time wore on, and the Wolf Hall Sherburnes fell from prominence. In 1680, the estate was sold to the Pattens, and in 1718, Sir Edward Stanley of Bickerstaffe leased Wolf Hall and its lands to a man named Henry Procter. The Procter family, known as the "Woofus" Procters, had arrived from Wyresdale and settled in the area.

Henry Procter, a hardworking and determined man, took on the lease of Wolf Hall and its surrounding farmlands. He had aspirations of making a prosperous life for himself and his family amidst the wild beauty of Wolf Fell. Henry's dedication and perseverance soon began to bear fruit.

Over the years, the Procter family established themselves as respected members of the community. They toiled on the land, tending to their crops and livestock, as well as operating the Wolfen Mill for grinding grain. The fields were filled with oats, wheat, rye, and barley, providing sustenance for both the family and the local breweries.

As generations passed, the Procter family's connection to Wolf Fell and the surrounding area deepened. They grew in number, their presence entwined with the land they called home. The winds that swept across the moors carried whispers of their history and their toil.

One particular member of the Procter family, Thomas Procter, had a deep fascination with the legends of the wolves. He was captivated by the stories of the wolves' presence on Wolf Fell, the howls echoing through the night and the majestic creatures roaming freely.

Thomas spent countless hours poring over the old records and tales, piecing together the fragments of the past. He longed to witness the spirit of the wolves that had once graced the land—a yearning that set him apart from his kin.

One evening, as the sun began its descent behind the hills, Thomas ventured out onto Wolf Fell alone. His heart pounded with anticipation, and the wind whispered secrets in his ear. He climbed the steep grassy slopes of Parlick, following the path his ancestors had walked countless times.

Finally, he reached the summit, the view stretching out before him in all its grandeur. The moorland sprawled in every direction, a testament to the wildness that still lingered. Thomas felt a surge of awe and reverence for the untamed beauty that surrounded him.

Emboldened by the moment, Thomas pressed on, guided by the fences and gritstone walls that marked the way. He moved with purpose, his steps steady despite the wind's ceaseless assault. The landscape shifted around him as he descended into the peat hags and towards the Bowland valley.

It was there, in the midst of the moorland, that Thomas Procter caught a glimpse of something extraordinary. A pair of piercing eyes stared back at him from the depths of the wilderness. The last wolf of Wolf Fell had revealed itself to him.

In that fleeting encounter, Thomas felt a connection that transcended time and space. He saw the spirit of the wolves in the lone creature before him, the embodiment of the untamed spirit that had once roamed freely across the land.

Word of Thomas's encounter spread throughout the community, reigniting the tales and legends of the wolves of Wolf Fell. The villagers marveled at the Procter family's legacy, their link to a bygone era. And though the last wolf eventually faded into the mists of time, the spirit of the wolves and the indomitable nature of Wolf Fell lived on.

The Procter family continued their stewardship of the land, passing down the stories and traditions from generation to generation. They became the custodians of Wolf Fell, the keepers of its history, and the guardians of its wild soul.

To this day, as visitors explore the enchanting wilderness of Wolf Fell, they can sense the presence of the wolves that once roamed the land. The echoes of their howls and the whispers of the wind serve as a reminder of the enduring bond between the land and those who call it home—the last wolf and the descendants of the Woofus Procters.

By Donald Jay.